

CIRCLE TIME IDEAS

~MARCH~




March 17th is St. Patrick's Day! St. Patrick's Day is celebrated worldwide with people eating green food, and wearing green clothes. This is a great time for children to learn the color **green!**

March 20th is the first day of Spring! Enjoy some of these craft ideas, activities, rhymes and songs, to help celebrate the coming of **SPRING!**

This year, **Easter** falls on **March 31st**. The time for bunnies and chicks and Easter egg hunts! Enjoy some of these fun ideas for crafts, snacks and games to celebrate the holiday!

SONGS & RHYMES

<p>Leprechaun Song (Tune: I'm a Little Teapot)</p> <p>I'm a little leprechaun, dressed in green The tiniest man that you ever have seen. Come and try to catch me if you're so bold Then you'll find my big pot of gold!</p> 	<p>Five Green Shamrocks</p> <p>1 green shamrock in the morning dew Another one sprouted, and then there were two.</p> <p>2 green shamrocks growing beneath a tree Another one sprouted and then there were three.</p> <p>3 green shamrocks by the cottage door Another one sprouted, and then there were four.</p> <p>4 green shamrock seen near a beehive Another one sprouted, and then there were five.</p> <p>5 little shamrocks, bright and emerald green, Wow! Think of all the luck these shamrocks will bring!</p>
<p>The Leprechaun (Fingerplay)</p> <p>A leprechaun is small and green, (Use hand to indicate a small person.) He hides where he cannot be seen. (Cover eyes with hands.) But if you catch one on this day, (Shake finger.) He must give all his gold away. (Pretend to put gold in pocket.)</p>	<p>Spring Song (Tune: Are You Sleeping)</p> <p>It's now Spring time It's now Spring time Winter's gone Winter's gone Summer time is coming Summer time is coming It won't be long Not too long</p>

I'm a Little Chicky

(Tune: I'm a little Teapot)

I'm a little chicky, (crouch down inside your egg)

Ready to hatch

Pecking at my shell (Pecking motion)

Scratch, scratch, scratch! (scratching motion)

When I crack it open, out I'll leap (jump out of shell)

Fluff up my feathers, Cheep, Cheep, Cheep!

Hoppity Easter Bunny

(Tune: Eensy, Weensy Spider)

The Hoppity Easter Bunny is coming straight for me.

Closer and closer, he hops up on my knee!

Now he's up on my shoulder and heading for my ear!

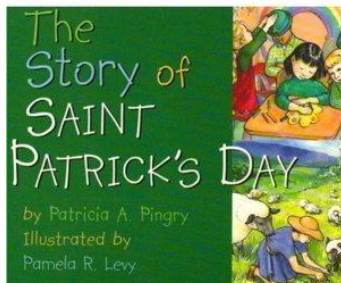
He shouts "Happy Easter my friend! The day is finally here!"

BOOK SUGGESTIONS



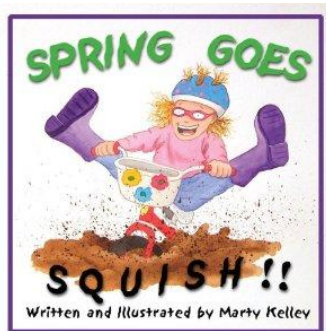
Mouse's First Spring

By Lauren Thompson



The Story of Saint Patrick's Day

By Patricia A. Pingry

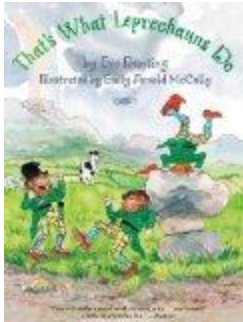


Spring Goes Squish!!

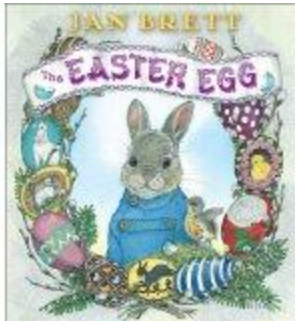
By Marty Kelley



Baby's First Easter
By Hinkler Books



That's What Leprechauns Do
By Eve Bunting & Emily Arnold McCully



The Easter Egg
By Jan Brett

SNACK IDEAS

Shamrock Sandwiches

Cut the bread into shamrock shapes with a cookie cutter. Then add a dash of green food coloring to butter or mayo or cream cheese and spread onto the bread. Add whatever other toppings your children will like.

Healthy Shamrock Shakes

A healthy start to the morning! This recipe contains no food coloring!

- 1 frozen, really ripe banana
- 1 c milk (I used Almond Breeze Almond Coconut Milk, but you can use any milk you choose)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c kale (or other dark, leafy green of your choice)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ t vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ t mint extract
- ice cubes

Pot of Gold Fondue

Coat the inside of a crock pot with green food coloring. Add any cream based soup, and let the children start to stir. Magic happens!! Dip in bread chunks or veggies for a warm, yummy snack!

Easter Egg Bagels

A fun and healthy Easter snack! Separate cream cheese into several small bowls. Then tint the cream cheese with different colors of food coloring. Provide each child with a half of a bagel and a plastic knife. Let the children spread the cream cheese on their bagels to create beautifully colored Easter egg bagels!!

Easter Bunnies

A cute snack for Easter!

Ingredients required:

- Pear halves
- Raisins
- Miniature marshmallows
- Lettuce
- Apple slices
- Cream cheese

Children place a lettuce leaf on their plate. Place a pear half on the lettuce to form the body. Using the cream cheese as "glue", add raisins for eyes and nose, apples slice for ears, and a miniature marshmallow for the tail.

CRAFTS IDEAS

Note: Best practice is to allow children to express their own creativity without using patterns.

Shimmering Shamrock

Cut a shamrock shape out of white finger paint paper. Let the children discover how mixing yellow & blue paint will make green! Let them paint the shamrock and when they are done, sprinkle some green glitter over the entire shamrock.

Supplies needed :

- White Finger Paint Paper
- Blue & Yellow Finger Paint
- Green Glitter

Potted Rainbow

Paint the pot black. Paint the exterior and the inside rim so it looks all black. Push the foam down into the pot. Stick the popsicle sticks in at an angle so it looks like the rainbow is ending in the pot. Make sure there is enough foam in the pot for the gold coins. Cut out a cloud shape from either card stock or a paper plate and glue on some cotton balls to make the cloud look fluffy. Glue the cloud onto the popsicle sticks. Fill the pot with gold coins. Finish off the pot by painting a shamrock onto the front and adding a ribbon.

Supplies needed :

- terra cotta pot
- black and green paint
- gold coins
- colored popsicle sticks (or paint regular ones)
- floral foam
- cotton balls
- card stock or small paper plate
- glue

Easter Basket

Punch holes around the "basket" (styrofoam cup.) Lace ribbon through holes and tie a bow. Decorate the outside of the basket with markers, stickers, sequins, etc. Add Easter grass and some eggs. Poke a pipe cleaner into each side of cup for the handle.

Supplies needed:

- Styrofoam Cup
- thin ribbon
- hole punch
- sticker, markers, sequins, etc.
- pipe cleaner
- Easter Grass
- Eggs - decorated or candy or other treats

GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Activity/Game #1: Search for the Pot of Gold

Tie several pieces of ribbon or yarn from end to end...first red, then orange, yellow, green, blue, violet. Then run the length of it throughout your play space. Weave it around corners, chairs, tables, toys, etc. Have the children follow the "rainbow path" to find the treasure -- a leprechaun's pot of gold! Include coins, small toys, stickers, gold rocks, or whatever else is fun to hide!

Activity/Game #2: Leprechaun Gold Game

Spray paint small rocks with gold paint and hide them in a sand table. Tell the children the leprechaun has lost his gold and they need to help find it.

Activity/Game #3: Bunny, Bunny, Rabbit

This is played like Duck, Duck, Goose. But instead of running, the children HOP! Everyone sits in a circle. Someone stands up and goes around the circle, tapping the other children on the head, naming them either Bunny or Rabbit. If you are named the Rabbit, then you jump up and hop around the circle and try to beat the other child back to your spot.

Activity/Game #4: Easter Egg Hunt

Hide 10 eggs in 2 different colors (if you have a large group of children, make more teams and more colors for eggs.) Make 2 teams. Give each team a specific color to look for. A child from each team takes a turn. The children have to find ONLY their color egg. If they see another color egg, they must leave it where it is and they cannot tell the others looking for that color. First child back with all 10 of the correct colored eggs wins!

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

Discussion #1: Food Provided During Group

Guidelines:

When meals or snacks are included in the parent child program, the program will:

- serve nutritious foods based on *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*
- ensure only foods with low-choking potential are served
- ensure no foods containing peanut products are given to children under the age of three

Be aware of any participants who suffer from **food allergies**.

Parents or guardians are responsible for any special dietary or feeding arrangements for their children.

Choking is a concern when feeding young children. Adults can help prevent choking by knowing the children's chewing and swallowing abilities, by **avoiding hazardous foods** and by **supervising the children while eating**. The greatest risk is for children under the age of three. Foods most likely to cause choking are those that are cylindrical in shape (ex: wieners, whole grapes); hard pieces of

food (ex: candy, popcorn, nuts or vegetable pieces); and very sticky foods (ex: peanut butter not spread on bread). Wieners and vegetables, like carrots, are safer if cut in narrow, lengthwise pieces. Children must eat sitting upright — not lying down, running or laughing.

Foods containing known peanut products must not be served to children less than three years of age. Allergy specialists advise that children under three not be served peanuts and/or peanut products, because their immune systems are not fully developed until the age of three. Exposure to peanut products before this age could lead prematurely to the development of an allergic reaction. As a result, adults who prepare and serve food must read food labels carefully to determine what ingredients the products contain and to ensure that no peanut products will be served.

Food preparation areas must be supervised whenever food is being prepared or the oven is in use. In cases where the kitchen is readily accessible to the play area, an infant gate, or other means of blocking access to the kitchen, should be provided.

A multi-purpose **fire extinguisher** should be located near the kitchen.

BEST PRACTICE:

Nutritious fresh foods are provided and **culturally diverse foods** are offered on a continual basis.

Snack times are pleasant, culturally appropriate occasions, and provide an environment for social learning and positive interaction.

Adults sit with children during snack and meal times to help create a relaxing and enjoyable experience. Children are encouraged to eat and to decide when they are finished.

Program Leaders should encourage conversation about the concepts of colour, quantity and temperature of food, eating behaviours and events of the day.

Children can practice feeding themselves and are actively involved in snack time activities, such as serving food, cleaning and setting the table.

It's best to choose child-sized utensils and serving dishes for the children, if available.

Children should be offered choices. Food provided includes a variety of colours, textures, flavours, sizes, shapes and temperatures.

Program Leaders should encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene (washing hands).